



President's Diversity Council Meeting Summary

Meeting Date	December 1, 2008		Meeting Time	4:00 — 6:00 PM	
Location	Terrace Room, Commons Building, Sonoma State University				
Attendees	√			√	
Barnard, Melinda	√		Lopez-Phillips, Matthew		Suzuki, Joyce
Brodsky, Karen			Miller, Scott	√	Velasquez-Andrade, Elisa
Bruce, Rose			Morrow, Lynne		Villarreal De Silva, Ricardo
Espinoza, Rachel			Neville, Peter		Wright, Gail
Estrada, Kelly	√		Pierre, Derek		Guests:
Holmstrom, Laurel	√		Ochoa, Eduardo	√	Ruben Armiñana
Ibarra, Maricela			Rhodes, Chuck		Mack Olson
Jordan, Myron	√		Roehrick, Tony		
Leeder, Elaine	√		Su, Meng-Chih	√	Recorder: Shawn Kilat

President's Comments

President Armiñana welcomed members of the President's Diversity Council and thanked them for their willingness to participate in this important endeavor. He discussed the changing demographics of the workforce and the need to improve diversity recruitment and retention in higher education. Armiñana noted that 50% of California high school students do not meet CSU eligibility requirements. The percent is better in Sonoma County, however many students still choose to attend a junior college and transfer later to a four year institution. Armiñana believes SSU needs to improve its outreach efforts. Statistics show a low percentage of African American students attending college nationwide, except at the historically Black colleges. SSU's admit rate for African American and Hispanic students is good, but the yield rate remains low. He also discussed diversity in the curriculum, another area with room for improvement. It is his hope that the Council will be able to address these and other critical issues related to improving the diversity climate at SSU.

Envisioning Diversity at SSU

Kelly Estrada introduced herself and talked about her experience working with Roseland University Preparation students. Her involvement with this program has been very rewarding, and she continues to focus on diversity issues in higher education. She facilitates group activities and discussion around the topic of diversity. Estrada began today's activities by asking Council members to brainstorm on what they think of when they hear the word "diversity." A separate document lists the group's responses.

For the second activity council members formed small groups to discuss and formulate responses to the following questions:

- What do we mean by diversity?
- What is our diversity vision statement?
- What is a good working diversity statement for Sonoma State University?

Each group reported back to the full council with their responses to the questions. Estrada emphasized that a primary goal of this activity is to work towards a consensus regarding a diversity vision statement that fits SSU. The “carousel” portion of this activity was not done due to lack of time. Small group responses included the following:

- Importance of a safe and comfortable environment
- Engage faculty in the process of considering their own “privilege”
- Recognize differences among individuals
- Guard against oppression
- Teach flexibility of mind, be open to change
- Encourage open dialog by challenging and supporting
- Importance of civil discourse

Miller offered the following summary of council responses:

“SSU embraces an understanding of diversity that encompasses the following principles: We strive to create a welcoming, safe environment that seeks to promote the best interests of all community members; We strive to create global citizens; We strive for inclusivity, justice and fairness; We strive to create an inclusive culture that reflects a diverse world; We strive to create a civil ground where difficult dialogs can take place.”

The council talked about ways to engage the larger campus community in the dialog on diversity. Ochoa talked about the recent student forum on diversity. Hearing first hand from students about their experiences on campus was informative. Velasquez seeks to keep a balance between the theoretical discussion and concrete actions. She does not want to spend too much time on formulating a new diversity vision statement. Others agreed, but cautioned that we must come to some agreement on the big picture before we develop an action plan.

Suggestions for engaging the campus community in the discussion included developing an electronic bulletin board, and sending out a mass email inviting input from all campus community members.

Ways to help faculty engage their students in the discussion included training faculty on the “Difficult Dialogs” method developed by the Ford Foundation.

Miller noted that the Faculty Retreat prior to the start of the Spring semester would focus on diversity.

Primary Goals / Task Forces

This topic was postponed due to lack of time.

Reading Materials:

Diversity Statements Handout

“Defining ‘Inclusive Excellence’”

2008 – 2009 Meeting Schedule

~~November 3~~ December 1 February 2 March 2 April 6 May 4

President's Diversity Council Meeting

December 1, 2008

Envisioning Diversity at SSU

Kelly M. Estrada

Activity 1: Defining diversity (whole group activity)

Activity 2: Envisioning a Diverse Campus (small group carousel, whole group discussion)

- Materials: Diversity Statements Handout

Activity 3: From “diversity” to Educational Excellence (small & whole group)

- Inclusive Excellence Handout

Categories for the Carousel

- Academic Programs
- Campus Community
- Forms of Inquiry
- Modes of Communication
- Distribution of Power/Authority

PDC DIVERSITY Brainstorm (12-1-08)

Council member responses to the question, “What word or thought comes to mind when you hear the word diversity?”

- Difference in perception
- Appreciation
- Variation in the human species
- Opportunity and access
- Understanding
- Beyond the surface
- Richness
- Complexity
- Privilege and oppression
- Strangers
- Power issues
- Exclusion
- Inclusion
- Participation
- Substantive sometimes threatening
- Differences in World View
- Richness in culture
- Fear
- Stigma
- Non-native speaker of English
- Religion
- Pain
- Ethnocentrism
- Structural inequality
- Political orientation
- Displacement
- Acceptance of difference
- Institutional forms of oppression
- Grow together
- Tolerate
- Global
- Race
- Class
- Gender
- Social groups
- Cope
- Coexist
- Sexual preference
- Orientation
- Synergy
- Color

- National origin
- Age
- Integrate
- SES
- Veteran status
- Disability
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